REMARKS

This amendment, submitted in response to the Office Action dated April 9, 2003, is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-19 are pending in the application. The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 5-12, and 15-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki (USP 6,072,916) in view of Yamamoto (USP 5,936,709). Claims 3, 4, 13, and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki as modified by Yamamoto as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Nishida et al. (USP 5,886,774). The Examiner rejected claims 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki as modified by Yamamoto as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Takaoka (USP 6,459,500). Applicant submits the following arguments in traversal of the rejections.

Rejection of claims 1, 2, 5-12, and 15-19

Claim 1

The Examiner maintains Suzuki discloses an image forming apparatus comprising a reading device, an image processor, a printer and an image recording device. The Examiner concedes that Suzuki fails to teach both of outputting the image recording device further comprising an original identifying information input device for inputting information for identifying the original before the original is read and a data base for storing the inputted original identifying information in relation to the image file, and cites Yamamoto to cure the deficiencies.

The Examiner maintains Yamamoto discloses an index print (IP) and seal (10) with a bar code printed by a conventional printer for the purpose of improving the efficiency of

reorder/reprint process and quality of reprints. The Examiner further maintains that Yamamoto storing means 6 comprises a database for storing identifying information. Even assuming, *arguendo*, that the references may be combined, the rejection of independent claim 1 is deficient for at least the following reasons.

First, the Examiner has not fully taken into account the recitation of the database. The database is for storing inputted original identifying information *in relation to the image file*. The rejection is silent as to the last clause thereby suggesting that the Examiner has improperly ignored this aspect of the claim.

Second, the cited means 6 of Yamamoto corresponds to a collating device rather than a type of device for storing information in relation to each other. The collating section 6, consisting of first and second identifying mechanisms 11 and 12, reads barcode or order information printed on the back of an index print and the information of a DP bag 8 to make sure they correspond. Column 9, lines 22-34. The collation is between barcode data (order information) and bar code information. By contrast, claim 1 describes the identifying information in relation to an image file.

For the above reasons, claim 1 and its dependent claims should be deemed patentable. Independent claim 9, including an analogous feature, is allowable for similar reasons.

Claim 15

The Examiner maintains Suzuki in view of Yamamoto discloses the original is data from a digital camera and cites column 1, lines 34-41 in support. Applicant submits it is unclear whether the Examiner is referring to Suzuki or Yamamoto. If the Examiner is referring to Suzuki, the respective column and lines cited by the Examiner describe a digital photoprinter

since a film is photoelectrically read out. Column 1, lines 34-35. Therefore, Suzuki teaches the original data is from film and not data from a digital camera. If the Examiner is referring to Yamamoto, again the respective column and lines describe the process of developing and printing film. Therefore, the original data in Yamamoto is also from film and not from a digital camera. For the above reasons, claim 15 and dependent claim 16 should be deemed patentable. Since claim 17 describes similar subject matter, it is patentable for the same reasons.

Claims 18 and 19

Applicant would bring to the Examiner's attention that nothing in either Suzuki or Yamamoto was cited for describing the database is accessible by at least two laboratories. Regardless, at most the references disclose one laboratory where the film is developed. See Yamamoto column 6, lines 8-12. Since only one laboratory is disclosed in either reference, there is no data exchange between two laboratories as described in claim 19.

Rejection of claims 3, 4, 13, and 14

Claims 3, 4, 13 and 14 were rejected in view of Nishido. In Nishido, processing information in the form of a barcode is attached to a container which holds film (if the container is a cartridge) or to the film itself (if the container is a patrone). See figures 4a and 4b. The processing information is read by a bar code reader and based on the processing information indicated for the film, the film will be sorted and directed to different developing devices. See figure 1. Presorting the film according to their processing condition will decrease the number of times parameters on a printer are modified, thus increasing the speed at which images are developed. Column 2, lines 53-65.

Claim 3 describes an identifier having a marker attached thereto is disposed to an extreme end of an original, and the marker is read by the reading device at the same time the image of the original is read. Additionally, the reader for the identifying information is also the reader for photoelectrically reading the original. In Nishido, the barcode marker is not read by the reading device for photoelectrically reading the original at the same time the image of the original is read. A barcode scanner would not be able to read images from the film.

Claim 4 describes a unit for magnetically reading information having a marker disposed to an extreme end of the original and the marker is read by the reading device at the same time the image of the original is read. The Examiner cites Nishida column 1, lines 34-52 in support of the rejection. The respective column and lines cited by the Examiner describe utilizing magnetically recorded information, but nowhere it is indicated that the magnetic information is disposed at an extreme end of the original. In addition, the magnetically recorded information described in Nishida is utilized after the development/printing by an automatic packing device which packs the film into its corresponding packing envelope. Column 1, lines 35-40. Therefore, the marker is not read by the reading device at the same time the image of the original is read.

Rejection of claims 18 and 19

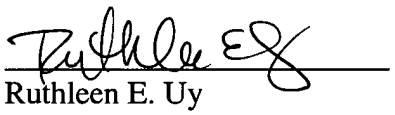
Claims 18 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki as modified by Yamamoto and further in view of Takaoka, however, claims 18 and 19 should be deemed allowable based on their dependency to claim 1.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Ruthleen E. Uy
Registration No. 51,361

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373
PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Date: July 9, 2003

APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims are amended as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:

a reading device for photoelectrically reading an image of an original to obtain digital image data;

an image processor for subjecting the digital image data to a predetermined image processing to obtain a processed image data;

a printer for outputting a print according to the processed image data; and

an image recording device for outputting the image processed data to an image file; wherein

both of outputting said print with the printer and outputting said image file with the image recording device are executed;

further comprising:

an original identifying information input device for inputting information for identifying the original before the original is read; and

a data base for storing the inputted original identifying information in relation to the image file.

17. (Amended) An image forming ~~device~~ apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said character string is input when said original is from a digital camera.

18. (Amended) An image forming ~~device~~ apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said data base is accessible by at least two laboratories.

19. (Amended) An image forming ~~device~~ apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said laboratories are connected to each other through a network in order to exchange data.